

THE WAY THEY LIVE IN JAPAN.

The Japanese are copying our railroads and electric telegraphs. May we not profitably take from them some of their simple and primitive inventions in the art of honest government, just by way of a "swap," as President Lincoln would say?

If only one traveler in Japan had brought back reports of the marvelous integrity and economy of the Japanese system of home government, we should have doubted the story—putting it on a par with the anthropophagi and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders.

The King of Siam, when a piece of ice, imported from some northern region, was shown him, could not be made to believe that such a freak of nature was possible, and stoutly maintained that it must be a Juggler and a hoax, because he had never seen ice in his own country. This skepticism was natural under the circumstances. So we, who have so little honesty and economy in the administration of our Government, that the world, like the things, have come quite obsolete, might seriously doubt those wonderful stories from Japan, if they were not confirmed by a number of respectable travelers.

I may prove instructive to run a parallel between the Japanese system of affairs and ours. In Japan, when a public officer steals from the treasury, he is tried by a civil court, and, if found guilty, he is beheaded, or, if his rank deserves that distinguishing mark, he is executed by the sword. He is gradually permitted to consult his family, he is gradually permitted to consult his friends, he is gradually permitted to consult his country, but he is gradually permitted to consult his conscience, and he is gradually permitted to consult his God.

A delinquent in our Government is tried by a jury of his peers. Here, if the statements of investigating committees and disinterested radicals are to be believed, the Government is a vast conspiracy, and the particular individual is looked upon by his friends as an instance of personal or political animosity or malice. The man who is accused of this or that is given the interpretation of his arrest. Instead of being brought to trial by a court, he is released on bail, and may sail for Europe if he likes.

If he stands a trial his chance of acquittal is good, and if he is convicted, the worst punishment that he can suffer is a fine or a term of imprisonment. This is better than a decapitation, or even than the exalted privilege of *Arrêt de mort*. The American, when he is arrested, is given the interpretation of his arrest. Instead of being brought to trial by a court, he is released on bail, and may sail for Europe if he likes.

In Japan, the laws are issued by the order of the Emperor, and are simple and intelligible. All citizens are equal before the law. The laws are issued by some order—just now it is difficult to say precisely what—and though we have what is called a Congress, it is little more than a recording board, while the laws are neither simple nor intelligible. They are such riddles as might have been propounded by the Sphinx.

The tax law has been before the public two or three years, and how many fully understand it? It was not until the collection of the tax was received, and a large amount of money was paid, and judicial interpretations, that they could make head or tail of it. The enormous bill has been sent from the Japanese capital, and the collector Whiting has not yet delivered his bill on the subject.

Look at the gold bill, and the multitude of diverse constructions that are placed upon that. And so with dozens of other laws. Nobody can understand them, and they are not made public until they are in full force. The Japanese system of taxation is a mystery, and the last piece of the puzzle is the nation above them is to Congress. Should we not gain by a "swap" with the Japanese?

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THE DAILY EVENING TELEGRAPH.—PHILADELPHIA, TUESDAY, JULY 5, 1864.

CONCLUSION.

Congress succeeded, late on Saturday night, in passing the new Conscription bill. Under this act, drafts may be made for one, two, or three years; bounties of \$100, \$200, or \$300 are awarded for one, two, and three years' service respectively. Commutation is no more; but every one drafted may serve in person or by substitute, and fifty days' notice must be given before enforcing the draft. Each State is at liberty to obtain substitutes in the States in insurrection and have them credited on their quota. We do not see how it could have been rendered more lenient, if the Government had the power of recruiting our armies to be made in view.

When the first Conscription Act was passed, we heartily approved and sustained the commutation therein embodied. So long as the Government could find substitutes for \$300, it was wise and right to accept that sum instead of personal service, and use it to sustain a willing instead of an unwilling soldier. But the time has changed, compelling a change in the laws. The War Department, which at first held the \$300 a full equivalent for personal service, now reports a vitally changed state of facts.

Labor is scarce and wages high, so that money is largely paid in commutation, and the \$300 each will no longer procure the same number of men required. The Rebels have called out their every white male who can carry a musket, so that our Government now regard them, as their very last ditch. But the waste of the conscription has been very great; and we need replenished ranks to finish the work. To obtain them it is essential that a call be now made which will bring not only men, but money. Hence the new law.

When the first act was passed, the \$300 commutation was made the chief object of objection. The Government has fairly won the idea of compelling the poor to serve and at the same time to pay for it. The new law is a bloody and brutal draft. It is a draft in our city, but in summer we are in good part evoked and kept by the clamor against the \$300 exemption. But, from the moment where the War Department decided to ask for a repeal of the commutation clause, every Congressman in Congress has fought against it. The new law has been carried over the votes of them all. And the possibility of a repeal is now as remote as the enactment of this provision.

A special war tax was enacted by Congress during Saturday's sitting. 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